

11/10/2008 This Week in Congress

This Week in Congress

November 10, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Congress remains out of session, which allows me to travel extensively across our state and visit with many Kansans. This week, our country turned out to vote in a historic election. Thank you for participating in the elections and making your vote count. Now that the election is through, I am calling on all my colleagues, both those new and those returning to make an effort to end political gamesmanship and focus on going back to work for the good of the country. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Honoring Veterans on Veterans Day

Tomorrow, our county celebrates Veterans Day. In cities and towns across America, we dedicate this day to honoring veterans of all generations who have given so much and who continue to give on our behalf so that we may live in the greatest country in the world. If you have a veteran in your life - whether it is a family member, neighbor, or coworker - make sure to tell them thank you for their service to our country.

Touring Construction of Fort Riley State Veterans Cemetery in Junction City

This week, I toured the progress of the construction of the Fort Riley State Veterans Cemetery, which began last fall. The VA provided an initial grant in November 2007 and a final grant in March 2008 to provide funding for the construction of the cemetery. The cemetery is located west of the Manhattan Regional Airport on 90 acres that were donated by Fort Riley. It includes space for approximately 10,000 burial sites. It will open next year and will serve as an honorable burial space for Kansas veterans.

There are four state veterans cemetery in Kansas. These state-operated veterans cemeteries provide space for burial for those who have served a term of active duty and been honorably discharged from the military, reserves or National Guard, as well as their dependents.

Thanks to Kafer Peele III, cemetery program director for Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs (KCVA), for inviting me on the tour. I was joined on the tour by state House Representatives Sydney Carlin and Barbara Craft. Also on the tour were Lana Oleen; Kile Morrison; Ed Wiegers, KCVA Board Chairman; and Ken Kallenbach. [Click here to view a photo from my visit.](#)

Visiting VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Salina

It is important to make sure veterans have access to health care services in their communities. On Monday, I toured the VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Salina. Opened in 2001, this CBOC allows veterans in north central Kansas to receive primary care services closer to home rather than having to drive to a VA hospital in Wichita or Topeka. CBOC's play an important role in delivering quality VA health care in rural areas.

Visiting Kansas Communities

I continued my efforts to remain informed about issues important to Kansans by visiting with folks in several Kansas communities this week. The conversations I have while I travel across our state give me direction in our nation's capital.

Luray: While in Luray this week, I spoke with area residents at Luray Grocery, the post office, UMB Bank and Midway Co-Op. I got an update from several farmers on the fall harvest and discussed the economy and the presidential election with others.

Lucas: I stopped in Lucas on Monday and talked with community members at Lucas Motor Company, Brant's Meat Market, Troy's Grocery, Pony Express Community Bank, the post office, Leach & Naegele hardware store, the civic center and the Conoco service station. During my visit, I learned that Golden Living Center Nursing Home in Lucas closed in October. My staff has been in contact with Russell County Economic Development to learn more about the situation and offer support.

Solomon: On Monday, I was in Solomon to visit with folks in Dickinson County. I spoke with members of the community at DS & O Rural Electric Co-op, Solomon State Bank, Solomon Corporation, Solomon Senior Center and the post office.

Speaking to Kansas Students

Visiting Fort Hays State University: On Tuesday evening, I went to Forsyth Library at Fort Hays State University to visit with students about the national elections. More than 200 students who were affiliated with the American Democracy Project (ADP) were there to watch the national election results. During my visit, I thanked them for their interest in national issues and the voting process.

Speaking to Ellis High School: On Tuesday, I visited John Kohl's government classes at Ellis High School. I talked with students and listened to their comments and concerns on current political and government issues. I discussed the current state of the economy and the presidential election. I was very encouraged to see the students involved and interested in the political process.

Delivering Agriculture Lecture at Kansas State University: On Friday, I made a surprise visit to Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh's Agriculture Policy class at Kansas State University. Dr. Flinchbaugh has taught Agriculture Policy at Kansas State for 38 years and influenced many Kansas farmers, agribusiness managers and political leaders. I spoke with students about my role as a member of Congress and my experiences serving on the House Agriculture Committee in Congress. I also discussed with the students what the recent election results mean for the future of agriculture.

Attending USD 475 School Board Meeting

On Monday, I attended the USD 475 School Board meeting in Junction City to discuss the education priorities for the district. I visited with the board about the need to fully fund special education programs, the importance of Congress making reforms to No Child Left Behind and the unique challenges of educating students from a military base. I appreciate the leadership shown by school board members Russ Boland, Bob Henderson, Daphne Maxwell, Becky Bramlage, Dr. Anwar Koury, Mark Rosen, and Rep. LTC David Chase and by superintendent of schools, Dr. Ron Walker.

Visiting with the Kansas Farm Bureau in Manhattan

On Friday evening, I joined nearly 800 members of the Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) at their annual meeting in Manhattan. This year the group honored me with their "Friend of Farm Bureau" award. It has been an honor to work with the KFB. I will continue to work hard to represent Kansas producers so that we can provide the next generation of farmers an opportunity to experience the way of life we enjoy. Thanks to President of Kansas Farm Bureau Steve Baccus. Also in attendance was Congresswoman-elect Lynn Jenkins.

Attending Jayhawk Roundup

On Saturday, I joined University of Kansas alumni and supporters in Wichita to raise money for Jayhawk Roundup Scholarships. These scholarships provide funds for KU students that include undergraduate students in Lawrence and a third-year medical student at the KU School of Medicine-Wichita. A special thank you to Dave and Janet Murfin for hosting the event and the KU Endowment Association for the invitation.

Touring Bombardier Learjet in Wichita

On Wednesday I toured the Bombardier Learjet facility in Wichita to learn more about the facility. I serve on the House Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation, so it was interesting for me to learn that the site will take on assembly of the new Learjet 85 and expand production of the Learjet 60, which will produce hundreds of additional jobs in Wichita. The company will now have four aircrafts that will be either in design or production on the site. The Wichita facility currently employs approximately 2,700 people. Thanks to Stephanie Allen for setting up my visit. Also thanks to the vice president of Learjet, John Dieker and to vice president and general manager, David Coleal for inviting me on the tour.

Attending the Welcome Reception for the 2008 BASS Federation National Championship

On Monday, I spoke at the welcome reception for the 2008 BASS Federation National Championship in Junction City. The three-day event was held at Milford Lake on November 6 to the 8. It featured the best amateur anglers from 47 states and six countries including Zimbabwe, Italy, Japan, South Africa, Canada and Mexico, as well as the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

These individuals were competing for a spot to compete in the 2009 Bassmaster Classic that will be in Shreveport-Bossier City, Louisiana in February. It is a wonderful opportunity for our state to be able to host such an event and to highlight our state's fishing and wildlife areas. Thank you to the organizers of the event for inviting me and to the members of the Junction City community for hosting the event. Also thanks to the executive director, Connie Hall and assistant director, Rick Dykstra, of the Geary County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In the Office

Several Kansans visited my office in Washington, D.C., this week to receive tours of the United States Capitol, including Julian and Norma Huser of Victoria, Mel and Darnell Holopirek of Great Bend and Dennis and Yvonne Schneider and their daughter Janell of Tribune.

Very truly yours,

Jerry